

Message Text

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14

ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 413

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FOR KARL ACKERMAN, ARA/MGT, ALSO FOR GEORGE VARROS, SY

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: AFSP, JM

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR AUTHORITY TO PLACE ON SHORT TERM GOVERNMENT
LEASE APARTMENTS

1. IN VIEW OF CONTINUING DETERIORATION OF SECURITY SITUATION
HERE, WE HAVE ADOPTED A NEW HOUSING POLICY WHICH REQUIRES,
WITH CERTAIN EXCEPTIONS, NEWLY ARRIVING STAFF LEASE APARTMENTS
OR TOWNHOUSES RATHER THAN HOUSES. EXCEPTIONS WILL BE GRANTED:
(A) FOR SMALL NUMBER SENIOR OFFICIALS WITH REPRESENTATIONAL
RESPONSIBILITIES; (B) FOR STAFF WITH MORE THAN TWO ACCOMPANYING
MINOR DEPENDENTS; AND (C) WHENEVER SUITABLE APARTMENTS OR
TOWNHOUSES ARE NOT AVAILABLE WITHIN REASONABLE TIME FRAME.

2. IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS POLICY WILL BE DIFFICULT OWING TO
THE EXISTING HIGH DEMAND FOR AND SHORTAGE OF SECURE APARTMENT/
TOWNHOUSE UNITS, AND WILL HAVE MAJOR IMPACT THIS SUMMER
WITH TURNOVER AT THAT TIME OF ABOUT 50 PERCENT US MISSION STAFF.

3. TO OVERCOME THIS PROBLEM POST REQUESTS IMMEDIATELY AUTHORITY
TO COMMENCE PLACING ON SHORT TERM GOVERNMENT LEASE ALL
SUITABLE APARTMENT UNITS PRESENTLY UNDER PRIVATE LEASE
AND ADDITIONAL APARTMENTS AS THEY MAY BECOME AVAILABLE.
WE WISH TO AVOID EXPANDED BURDEN ON OUR SMALL ADMIN
SECTION AND THEREFORE DO NOT REPEAT NOT PLAN FURNISH ANY
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OF THE GOVERNMENT LEASED QUARTERS (WITH POSSIBLE EXCEPTION

ONE ADDITIONAL TRANSIENT APARTMENT UNIT; POST PRESENTLY HAS ON GOVERNMENT LEASE TWO FURNISHED TRANSIENT APARTMENT). FUNDS PERMITTING, WE WOULD, HOWEVER, ACQUIRE TWO OR THREE "LOANER" SETS OF FURNISHINGS TO ASSIST NEWLY ARRIVING PERSONNEL PENDING ARRIVAL THEIR HOUSEHOLD EFFECTS. WE ALSO WOULD EXPECT TENANTS OF GOVERNMENT QUARTERS TO LOOK TO LANDLORD AND NOT EMBASSY FOR MAINTENANCE, REPAIRS, ETC.

4. FOREGOING RECOMMENDATIONS ARE CONSISTENT WITH THOSE IN CURRENT FOREIGN SERVICE INSPECTION REPORT.

5. REGARDING COST IMPLICATIONS WE BELIEVE APPROVAL FOREGOING WILL IN FACT ASSURE SOME SAVINGS SINCE MOST NEWLY ARRIVING PERSONNEL PRESENTLY SPEND FROM TWO TO THREE MONTHS ON TEMPORARY LODGING ALLOWANCES WHILE SEEKING SUITABLE HOUSING IN KINGSTON. MOREOVER, OUR ABILITY TO LEASE APARTMENTS UNITS FOR THREE TO FIVE YEARS OR MORE SHOULD OVER THE LONG RUN DAMPEN THE ESCALATION OF RENTAL RATES. AT PRESENT, RENTAL RATES ARE INCREASED EVERY TIME THERE IS A CHANGE OF OCCUPANT IN A PRIVATELY LEASED APARTMENT -- OR EVEN MORE FREQUENTLY AS EVIDENCED BY THREE INCREASES IN QUARTERS ALLOWANCES FOR THIS POST IN LESS THAN ONE YEAR. MOST CERTAINLY INCREASES IN FUNDING FOR GOVERNMENT LEASED QUARTERS WILL BE OFFSET BY DECREASES IN FUNDING FOR TLA AND QUARTERS ALLOWANCES.

6. THE NEW HOUSING POLICY ALSO WILL REDUCE SIGNIFICANTLY A MAJOR HARDSHIP FACED BY MOST NEW STAFF, I.E. LONG RESIDENCY IN HOTELS WHILE AWAITING SUITABLE QUARTERS FOR PRIVATE LEASE.

7. PLEASE ADVISE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE; IT WILL BE INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT TO ENFORCE NEW HOUSING POLICY WITHOUT AUTHORITY PROMPTLY LEASE APARTMENT UNITS AS THEY COME ON TO THE MARKET.
GERARD

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